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FM AMEMBASSY LUANDA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5386  
INFO SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS LUANDA 000182

PLEASE PASS TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. PEACE CORPS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [KDEM](#) [AO](#)

SUBJECT: ANGOLA INTERESTED IN EXPLORING U.S. PEACE CORPS  
MISSION TO TEACH ENGLISH

REF: A) LUANDA 107 B) LUANDA 67 C) 08 LUANDA 877 D)  
08 LUANDA 907

¶1. Summary: Since the installation of Angola's new government in October 2008, senior GRA officials, including the President, the Prime Minister, over ten ministers or acting ministers, and a host of vice ministers and others, have told the Ambassador that English-language training is a priority need for Angola's economic and social development. A U.S. Peace Corps mission of 75-100 Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) teaching English at secondary schools in Angola's provincial capitals and other major cities could help address this pressing need. End Summary.

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Why English-Language Training Is Important to Angola  
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¶2. Angolan leaders tell us that English-language training is an essential, but lacking, element in Angola's long-term political, economic, and education strategy. President Dos Santos told Ambassador Mozena during their February 17 meeting (Ref A) that Angola requires better command of English as it emerges as a regional power through greater participation in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC). The Minister of Finance volunteered (Ref D) that his ministry's officials require more English-language training to participate more fully in regional policy debates, global seminars, and U.S. or European-sponsored training opportunities. The Minister of the Economy and the Acting Minister of Education (Ref C) both told the Ambassador that students need improved English-language skills to take better advantage of educational opportunities overseas, before returning to Angola to share their knowledge and ply their trade. The President, the Prime Minister, over ten ministers and acting ministers, and a host of vice ministers and others separately conveyed to the Ambassador that long-term progress toward a more English-literate Angola should begin in primary or secondary school.

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Could Peace Corps Be the Answer?  
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¶3. Considering the scope of Angola's English-language training needs and its request for U.S. assistance, we are exploring the possibility of establishing a Peace Corps Mission in Angola focused on placing PCVs in secondary schools to provide English-language training. As a supplemental activity, we propose that the Volunteers would engage in the fight against malaria and/or HIV/AIDS. During his meeting with the Ambassador, President Dos Santos said he would direct the Minister of Foreign Affairs to explore the possibility of inviting the Peace Corps to Angola. Dos Santos said that, while his government decided in the 1980s to decline assistance from the Peace Corps, times had changed and the idea deserved further consideration. Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Georges Chikoti - who also has supervisory responsibility over the Office for American Affairs - told the Ambassador in January that he, personally, had

recommended to the President against requesting a Peace Corps mission when the issue first came before the government several years ago. Chikoti said he now believed the time has come to welcome a Peace Corps mission, and that he would offer his support for the program. Prime Minister Kassoma told the Ambassador in October of 2008 that an English-language Peace Corps mission would be welcome in the provinces - he fondly remembered USAID projects in his home province of Huambo as an example of successful bilateral cooperation. The Prime Minister said he believed the GRA should explore with great interest the idea of inviting the Peace Corps to Angola.

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So, What Next?  
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¶4. GRA seems poised to request additional information concerning the creation of a Peace Corps mission in Angola. Post requests that the Peace Corps authorize the travel to Angola of a Portuguese-speaking official to offer a detailed briefing about the Peace Corps program and the possibilities for a Peace Corps Mission in Angola. Our experience with the GRA indicates that a draft request for further Peace Corps consultations should be left for the Angolans to consider. The draft request for consultations could lead to discussions toward an MOU with the GRA providing for the establishment of a Peace Corps mission in Angola.

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Comment  
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¶5. Given its abundant energy resources and its emerging role as a regional power in Africa, Angola is a key strategic partner for the United States. Peace Corps, unlike any other USG agency, brings a long-term social benefit with their unique brand of development assistance; this would help Angola to get to know America better. Angola is the only country in Southern Africa that has never hosted a Peace Corps mission, and the effects can be seen in the pent-up demand from Angolan citizens and leaders for a closer relationship with the United States. This intense interest was evident during our public outreach events related to the 2008 U.S. elections and continues as Angolans excitedly view the new U.S. administration. We should strike while the iron of Angola's interest is hot. Exposing Angolan leaders to the success of Peace Corps missions in Mozambique or Cape Verde would be a welcome next step.

MOZENA